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535 to the prescribed two or three, tiring themselves out to the plaudits of
527 those close by.

To the old-timers, however, the modern version of the traditional dance was a sad commentary on the state of things. They thought the young people too soft. After I had been watching the *horo* for some time an old man hobbled up to me. I had seen him shaking his head and muttering to himself, so I asked him, "What do you think of it, *dedo*?" He grunted, "It's all right for the young people to have a little fun, but they aren't as strong as I used to be when I was young. I used to hoe corn, harvest wheat, and come back to dance all evening. The young people can't do that now. And I wasn't as healthy as my father used to be."

535 The village registrar, Bai Angel, told me why there had been a declining interest in the *horo*, especially those which used to occur around the neighborhood fountains. About seven o'clock the people used to go to the pasture to get their animals. If the animals were slow in coming, then the people danced the *horo* there in the fields. When the animals had been taken home, and after the girls had finished up their housework, they went with jugs to one of the three fountains in the village and there danced again until eleven o'clock. In 1924 more fountains were installed in the village, thus tending to break up the larger groups which gathered around the three original fountains. The girls preferred to carry water from the fountains nearest their homes, and no longer attended the evening *horo*.

517 Tavern life was another, less colorful way of passing the bleak
521 winter days. In the four ill-ventilated *kruchmi* the men gathered to
275 discuss the harvest and to argue over the news read aloud from yester-
203 day's newspaper. Some man sought his godfather, or the godfather of a recently christened son or daughter, and invited him to have a drink of *rakiya* (plum brandy) or wine. Sometimes men who had completed a business deal drank to clinch it. Men who had been in the army together told the same tall tales of adventure over and over again, re-creating those experiences which lifted them for a while out of their limited village environment. There were seldom any fights, because the frequenters put an end to disagreements before they got

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out of hand. The fact that not all patrons of the tavern drank liquor was shown by the comment of one of the villagers:

"I come to the tavern chiefly for the newspaper. I have a strong will, drink little, and know when to stop. The young men when starting the temperance association asked me to be president but I couldn't give up coming here for the newspaper. The small coffee house across the square has only room enough for five or six people and there's no point in going there. Many blame me for going to the tavern, but they have no interest in finding out what is going on in the world."

One advantage of visiting the tavern included the announcements that the town crier always made there as well as out in the square.

The tavern keepers, however, had no illusions about their standing in the public estimation. All of them were of the same peasant stock as their patrons, but had sold some of their land in order to set themselves up in business.

"If the people of the village took a vote, the majority would favor shutting up all the taverns. The people don't like us," was the tart comment of one tavern keeper. This dislike sprang from the indebtedness of so many people to the tavern keepers, as well as from the strong feeling many have toward the social consequences of excessive alcoholism.

There were, however, a number of men who had to miss the morning session at the Dragalevtsy *kruchmi.* They were the milkmen. Each morning while it was still dark eight tiny donkeys left their yards, pattered down the slope just outside the village, and followed the straight gravel road five miles to Sofia. They were accompanied by their prodding masters who kept an eye on the two or three large cans of milk which had been strapped onto the wooden saddles. These donkeys long ago learned to swallow any pride they might have had, for each morning, with monotonous regularity, they were overtaken by the high two-wheeled horse-drawn milk carts used by the remaining thirty Dragalevtsy milkmen. Once in Sofia, the majority of the milkmen covered their routes, knocking at the doors of the regular customers and waiting patiently for a container into which to pour a quart or so of milk from the large cans. The round completed, most of the milkmen began at once to retrace the long uphill journey from the city's outskirts to the village.

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stopanin, or male head of the house, killed the cock and held its twitching body over a bag of grain seed so that several drops of blood would fall upon it. He then drove slowly to the field to prepare the ground for the sowing, meanwhile eagerly awaiting the arrival at midmorning of the *domakinya,* his wife, dressed in her most beautiful costume and bearing a pan containing the boiled cock, meal, and bread. The family group made a tour once around the field, whereupon the man solemnly broke the bread and, before sitting with the others in the middle of the field to feast, gave pieces of the bread to the oxen. The peasants called this the "sweetest meal of the year" and delighted in having friends from a neighboring field join them in the repast. Summer's hard work was at an end; the harvests were plentiful; the peasants were deeply grateful.

Life in these scattered fields of Dragalevtsy was hard and laborious, but to the peasant, life without the fields would not be worth living, for these narrow strips of land were his children growing under his painstaking care. The land was his companion and friend, as he shared with it the thoughts and dreams of a starlit summer night, with a cloak for a pillow and dew for a blanket. Land meant more to the peasant than money in the bank; it meant more than food on the table; it meant life itself.

Some years ago I heard a Sofia University professor say in a lecture that the Bulgarian peasant was more devoted to his work than to his religion. "There are more songs dedicated to labor than to saints," he added. Because I wondered about the truth of this statement in respect to Dragalevtsy, I polled village opinion. Here are some of the questions I asked, with representative or characteristic responses:

Nowadays, which do people enjoy most: working in the field or sitting in the tavern?

"People work to get bread. They can't earn money enough to save. Some prefer to work in the fields because we quarrel when we are in the *kruchma.*"

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"Most of the people prefer to be in the tavern, though there are some who go there to do *pazarluk* [arrange a business deal], drink a little, then leave to do their work again."

"I prefer to work in the fields than to sit in the tavern."

463 181

Why do young people want to become artisans and do not want to become farmers?

"They want easier work. Field work is heavy. If they work inside, they will live longer, the wind won't beat in their faces, they won't remain in the cold."

"It's better to work inside than out in the weather."

"If one is an artisan, one won't become hungry. There will always be work to do. But in the fields things are not so sure. Work is easier as an artisan than as a farmer. The money is only of minor importance."

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Do people of Dragalevtsy, like the heroes of old folk songs, love hard work more than easy work?

"They prefer easy work. Fifty years ago people liked the harder work, for there were few occupations. Now parents don't control their children. A son sees his father at one tavern and he goes to the other. If his father comes to the second tavern, then he goes back to the first. Formerly people had big fields and had to do much work. They prided themselves on the amount of work they could get done. They were healthier, because they didn't smoke and drink so much. The one who could work the most was the most honored. Now the fields are small. There is little work to do in them, and so people get out of the habit of working hard."

"They like easier work now. Everyone looks for something that is light. It was not so fifty years ago, but the change came about especially since the war."

"They love easy work. Formerly there were more animals, more fields, less people, and therefore more work."

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With what adjective would a Dragalevtsy peasant prefer to be described: industrious, rich, influential, wise?

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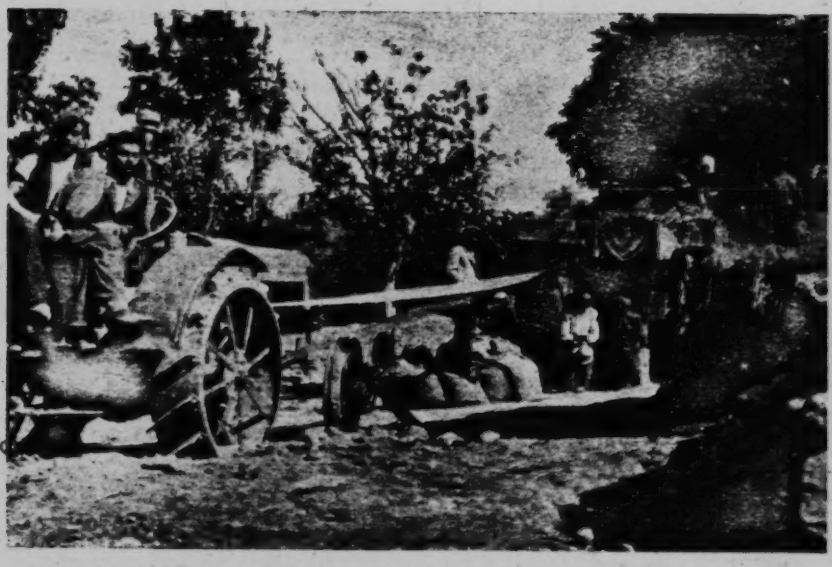

". . . they threshed the wheat of fifty-five farms . . ." *See page 151.*

517
275

"The people . . . customarily associated liquor with holidays and leisure times." *See page 155.*

[Facing p. 145]

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Flower bazaar and tavern: It is around the fourth destination on Fridays that fondest memories cling, because this is the spot near the Sofia flower bazaar where young people from surrounding villages go upon completing their morning duties in town. It is here that romance blossoms and young men from one village are introduced to girls from another. While the younger people are amusing themselves here the older people, especially the men, gather at the tavern called *Dulgata Mehana*, the particular establishment to which Dragalevtsy peasants are loyal.[1] They lunch and drink here, they rest here, and here they swap their stories. Nor is it without pride that they tell how Fiodor Chaliapin, the celebrated opera singer, in 1934 spent a very merry evening in this *Dulgata Mehana*, enjoying its drink and atmosphere. Seldom, however, does the peasant get to converse with the Sofia citizenry in this tavern. Here again he is in a peasant world; if he were not, he would feel decidedly uncomfortable. Should he decide to see a movie, in the afternoon he would go to a cheap theater on a side street and guffaw with his fellow peasants.[2]

2. To Serve His Country. The *trudova* system, or that of compulsory labor for the young men of Bulgaria, has received much attention in the West. It served a magnificent purpose, taking as it did young men from villages throughout the land, mixing them up in labor camps, and providing them with picks and shovels for the construction of highways, bridges, and other public works. But now the young Bulgarian citizen is given military training instead. This is not in keeping with the Treaty of Neuilly, which limited Bulgaria's armed forces to 33,000, but what nation in Europe, the Bulgarians ask, has been abiding by the treaties? The trend from *trudova* to military service is shown by the fact that in 1935 not a single youth was called from Dragalevtsy to do *trudova* service, but sixteen went to be trained as soldiers.

The effect of life in a labor camp or a military barracks upon the young men is apparent upon their return to the village. They have gone out from a family system where each member works unquestioningly as a part of the whole; they return, in spite of military discipline, often very conscious of their own individuality, and have to pass through a process of reconditioning before the early customs, habits, and patterns of thought again close in about them. However, before the returning young men are reabsorbed by the community, reverberations of struggle are felt throughout parts of the social structure. There are some who never again fall completely into line and who naturally

[1] Every village over a period of years has tended to select one tavern where peasants from that village spend their leisure time while in Sofia.

[2] Fifty-five per cent of the villagers (babies, children, and adults) have never seen a cinema. Out of 265 families reporting, *all* members of 73 families had seen a cinema; *no* members of 78 families had done so.